

# MONUMENTS TO THE PLURIVERSE: *A transfronteriza nepantlera's approach to rasquache anticolonial artisanal or utilitarian new media art production*

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## Abstract

In my explorations through new media art, I delve into expressing the intricate experience of inhabiting Nepantla—a non-place like the Borgian *aleph*, encapsulating all places simultaneously—a perpetual crossroads. This exploration is deeply entwined with my identity as a *transfronteriza*, constantly navigating the complexities of existence along the US-Mexico border. It is also intertwined with my experiences as a "first-generation" Chicana and descendant of Indigenous Californian and Baja Californians, as I long and search to reclaim a seized Indigeneity. I do this in acute awareness of the profound political ramifications that Mexican de-Indigenization has had on our communities, still currently facing coloniality as decontextualized and severely minoritized peoples.

This autoethnography-based article explains my perspectives, approach, theoretical background, and resources while defining my interpretation of *transfronteriza nepantlera* sensibility and methods. I aim to share some of the intricacies of the creative process for crafting *no-muralismo* or *Xicanx Indígena Transfronteriza Immersive Muralism*—a fusion of *rasquache*, anticolonial, and tech-driven artisanal/utilitarian art introduced by my VR piece, *The Coyolxauhqui Imperative 2020*. My core objective is to question the parameters that define new media art and VR world-making while destigmatizing the processes involved by inviting community members to share the diversity of experimental culturally driven ways in which it is possible to engage in new media art.

## Keywords

New Media Art  
Virtual Reality  
Folk and Artisanal New Media Art  
World Making  
Anticolonial / Decolonial  
Chicana  
Transfronteriza  
Nepantlera  
Rasquache  
Utilitarian New Media Art

## Introduction:

### On the complexities of Indigeneity or the story of an unwavering *espíritu rebelde*

*Because the struggle is collective, but the decision to struggle is individual, personal, intimate, as is the decision to go on or to give up... It is those men, women, and others who always, alive or dead, place themselves before Power... They are our compañeras, compañeros y compañeroas... although in the majority of cases neither they nor we know it... yet. Because rebellion, friends and enemies, does not belong exclusively to the neozapatistas. It belongs to humanity. And that is something that must be celebrated. Everywhere, everyday and all the time. Because rebellion is also a celebration. [1]*

As a *transfronteriza* and "first-generation" Chicana, I became aware of my Californian Indigenous heritage through knowledge passed down in my home. Our Indigenous cultures, languages, and knowledge were extracted over generations. We experienced significant disconnection from our Indigeneity due to violent impositions of the Catholic creed, Protestant beliefs, and the multidimensional marginalization found in coloniality that my ancestors and contemporaries experience.

My great-grandmother Aurora López Pantoja was a proud, independent, Afro-Indigenous strong-willed woman with 4c hair who rode horses and carried a shotgun around Tijuana. She was not afraid of talking back to anyone, including men of any class or race. She was once accused of causing a man's death due to his pride being so wounded that he suffered a heart attack from being unable to tolerate her boldness. Her youngest brother, *tío* Miguel Angel, conveyed the memory of not being taught Tipai or Paipai, yet being lullabied with songs he couldn't comprehend.

The rancho where she lived, where my grandmother grew up chasing hare and cultivating their own food was destroyed and finally split in half by a highway. It was taken over by Anglo, European, and Asian capitalist "development" in the area where now maquiladoras toxify the lives of communities of migrants in a once vibrant river valley.

There were deeply painful generational rifts, one was when her descendants were taught to see her as an evil witch and the songs, face painting, and dances her and the *tíos* engaged in as *ritos demoniacos* (demonic rites). Her blood reclaims within me.

Her husband, my great grandfather, José López Uribe, passed on the lively imagery of his memories of Colima, with his father lying dead over his *petate* (woven palm bed-roll) with his traditional clothes, *sombrero*, and *paliacate* (bandana). Of his mother being told by the catholic priest that if she wanted her husband to enter heaven, she had to relinquish the little land where they grew their food, to the church. Her consequent early death came by what my great grandfather referred to as “exploding lungs” from being forced to do laundry in the cold for a living. Whenever he remembered it in his old age, the bitterness and pain in his voice and tears blaming the greedy church were repeatedly passed on.

Orphaned at 9 years old, he was taken in by the Villistas. I hold on to the passed-on struggle of a *niño de la revolución*<sup>1</sup> who beat all odds by surviving, with *corridos* (Mexican ballads) he sang to my mother and her siblings and sharing pictures he kept as mementos of his dead friends who were shot in battle, executed by firing squads, or *colgados* (by hanging). Glaring into these images was his way of facing the source of pain of a great part of our familial trauma depicted in the perpetual sorrow of his *historias*. He passed on his rightful disgust of the Anglo treatment of Mexican and of Japanese people in California during WWII, his proactive defense of them and of the Chinese at the border<sup>2</sup> during a time when anti-Chinese propaganda was prominent in Mexico and beyond, until the day he had enough from *esos gringos hijos de la chingada*<sup>3</sup> and took his visa papers, ripped them apart, and threw them at the face of a racist border patrol agent who was trying to humiliate him while crossing. His blood boils within me.

In a nuanced blend of internalization and resistance of which I just shared a tiny fragment, I developed skepticism and reluctance especially toward Western European Anglo-Dutch culture, viewing the border and the associated culture as what they were: impositions with far reaching detrimental consequences. I learned freely of these suppressed contexts in childhood stories told to me by my great-uncles and aunts, grandmother, and mother, yet never in school. Luckily, I

have found historical evidence of this oral history in historical documents later in life. Such a thing is a rarity. Our experiences are and have been intensified by the political context of the US-Mexico border imposed on our ancestral lands, which has continuously affected our quotidian lives.

## ***Transfronteriza:* anti-borders**

Transfronteriza roughly translates to transborderite. From the context of Baja California, Norma Iglesias Prieto proposed this Mexican border identity for people who cross the border daily mainly for the purposes of education and/or entertainment. [2] This is contrasted by people whose goal is to cross once as migrants. For them crossing the border is like the experience of a gladiator in a coliseum, a life-or-death experience. But, for the *transfronteriza*, it is like the experience of the *luchadora libre* (Mexican wrestler) who goes to the gym perhaps even twice per day and practices on the ring.

To *transfronterizas*, the border is like the jumpy chords around the ring which they use to propel themselves in and out with even greater force. They have been trained in the methods of coloniality and developed their own decolonial methods within the context of this intensified border experience. The perpetual battle stance *transfronteriza* bodies and minds experience, emerges from daily border crossings and enduring quotidian racial, gender-based violence and mistreatment.

This is what built an *espíritu rebelde transfronterizo*<sup>4</sup> on individuals such as Carmelita Torres, a 17-year-old who crossed the border daily as a domestic worker cleaning houses in El Paso, Texas. She refused to be forced to be stripped naked and take a disinfecting kerosene and vinegar bath that was enforced on all Mexicans crossing the border.<sup>5</sup> This act of resistance led to the bath riots of 1917 with thousands of demonstrators protesting these practices at the border bridge. [3] *Transfronterizas* face fear inducing acts, and this trains them to be adept warriors—elite *guerrilleras* (guerilla warriors). Personally, these experiences forged my *lengua* (tongue) into a fiery and deft machete and my work is dedicated to the eradication of this violence in all its formats.

<sup>1</sup> Photographic evidence confirms participation of children in the Mexican revolution see, Chávez Leyva, Yolanda. "I Go to fight for social justice": Children as revolutionaries in the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920," *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Reserach* (17 December 2002) and Ochoa, Janeth. "Los niños que participaron en la Revolución Mexicana" in *México Desconocido*, <https://www.mexi-codesconocido.com.mx/los-ninos-que-participaron-en-la-revolucion-mexicana.html>

<sup>2</sup> History of his exploits offering housing to Chinese tenants on his land, a violation of the then imposed agrarian law, is well documented in Martínez, Pablo L. *Repercusiones ambientales de Tijuana durante el crecimiento industrial 1937-*

*1980: una aproximación desde la historia ambiental*. (2016). La Paz: Instituto Sudcaliforniano de Cultura.

<sup>3</sup> Roughly translates to “Those sons of bitches.”

<sup>4</sup> rebellious transborder spirit

<sup>5</sup> In *Ringside Seat to A Revolution: An Underground Cultural History of El Paso and Juarez 1893-1923* (2005), Mexican American historian David Dorado Romo connects U.S. Customs disinfection facilities in El Paso-Juarez to the *Desinfektionskammern* (disinfection chambers). These tactics at the US-Mexico border were studied by the Nazis who drew from them inspiration for the use of toxic chemicals such as Zyklon B to massively exterminate Jews in gas chambers beginning in 1941.

*Transfronterismo* challenges the myths of homogeneity and purity that have served to validate and uphold the existence of nation-states and their mythological identities, presenting an opportunity to explore not only diverse content but diverse formats and storytelling that move across modalities. Much of what is decolonial is perceived as innovative, yet it has root in Indigenous, Chicana, and anticolonial views and of similarly marginalized and ignored perspectives and wisdoms. [4]

I made it my life's work to talk about decoloniality in the context of *transfronterismo*. The perpetual crossroads experience offers *transfronterizas* and individuals like us valuable insights into translating design approaches that may seem innovative to a world entrenched in hierarchical and dichotomous Eurocentric paradigms. This is why I actively engage as an anticolonial new media artist, curator, and scholar within the transdisciplinary space that intertwines activism, community-centered participatory action research, accessibility, and the Chicana exploration of Indigeneity. I inhabit a space where I am not quite from the US, not quite from Mexico, not quite European, not quite Indigenous, not quite Chicana, not quite queer, not quite neurodivergent, not quite *fronteriza*.

This is paralleled by the experience of navigating and producing knowledge between disciplines as not quite a new media artist and not quite a curator, as a shape-shifting decolonial theoretician, Mexican and Latin American literary, border, Chicana, Indigenous, communication studies, and cultural scholar, media producer, digital archivist, activist, artisan, performer, researcher, critic, translator, teacher, mentor, activist, advocate, and healer.

I reject the narrow dichotomous lens of coloniality that downplays *transfronterismo* through a simplistic assumption or interpretation of it as lacking “low culture”, or the notion that it reflects a disadvantage when it transcends the borders imposed by the logic of coloniality, a result of the distortion of our Indigenous identities. “Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.” [5] Ironically, my perceived absence of homogeneity is the result of a tactical response to colonial violence, and the reason why some of us do not identify with US citizenship nor have tribal certifications is because we were dislocated from our cultures in ways that others were not. Not understanding that and persecuting individuals for having such experiences turns such attackers, even when Indigenous themselves, into agents of ~~supremacy~~ <sup>supremacy</sup>. [6]

Parallel, my existence in the in-between of epistemologies, embracing alternative imaginaries is another dimension of my attempts to not be fixated by this same coloniality. Thus, I embrace this pluridimensional transborder experience because this proactive act of resistance represents entering a battleground of a great number of attacks (from both ~~supremacist~~ <sup>supremacist</sup> and self-proclaimed decolonial sectors) some which I have explored [7] and others which I reserve for future publication. The hyper-consciousness arising from

being situated in the in-between is further intensified depending on the stacked intersectional levels of liminality navigated in the *lucha* (the struggle).

This is why I engage in scholarship and arts praxis as inter- and transdisciplinary and transvergent knowledge production. Transvergence refers to multiple overlapping and conflicting identities, issues, materials, perspectives—not necessarily converging—leading “somewhere else” that is unexpected, alien. [8] Referring to it as “the making of knowledge” or knowledge production, opens it up to the community in the form of content, formats, methods, and possibilities beyond those expected to be seen in scholarly and artistic institutions.

### ***Rasquache:* anti-elitism, anti-consumerism**

I use new media art and experimental forms of animation to question what it means to work with technology by applying *rasquache* methods. *Rasquache* is a Chicano Art concept, a sensibility and way of doing art and life that is directly inspired by the survival tactics of Chicano and other working class immigrant communities in the U.S. [9] It relates to making do with what is available. This is inspired by the butter container used for beans, the cookie tin storing threads and bobs, the old bathtub that becomes a niche for the Virgin of Guadalupe, the toilet that is a multi-tiered garden planter. This involves an ingenuity based on recycling and upcycling, repurposing leftovers, making things appear as something else, and it's usually done in a liberated way that questions the borders between art and artisanry, the formulations of beauty and aesthetics found in coloniality.

*Rasquachismo* relates to Indigenous perspectives such as the Nahua conceptualization of Tlazolteotl. Tlazolteotl “the eater or consumer of filth”, was the feminine representation of lust, sex, carnality, and disease it both provokes and cures. During the Spanish occupation she was thought to literally “eat shit,” representing to them, evil and demonic tendencies.

Gloria Anzaldúa revisits the Nahua significance of Tlazolteotl defined as the goddess of sacrifice, of extraordinary strength, shape-shifting qualities, and the gift of life giving, creativity, and production. [10] As Tlazolteotl turns waste into life, beauty, hope, and power, *rasquache* is a survival tactic to support and uplift communities who must live under dire circumstances and compete socially with lack of access to the same resources. Turning these “lacks” into generators of liberation and ingenuity.

As a doctoral student at UCSB, I took courses in the departments of English, Chicano Studies, Film, Music, Spanish, Computer Science, and Media Arts and Technology. I had not come to learn about new media and computational art praxis until the last year of my doctoral degree in 2013. I found that writing was not enough and was looking for a way to *immersively* present my findings on the relationship between hyper ill-representation of the border city of Tijuana in US mass media, the marginalization of Latinx cultures in the US, and the corresponding liberatory divergent

quality found in what I find to be an identifiable spectrum of internalizations, rejections, and projections within arts praxis and cultural production in Baja California.

I learned a lot of interesting approaches to new media art or technology driven art praxis. I also noticed that there was a predilection for a minimalist and at times elitist approach to technology centered on western European understandings of technology and world making, as well as a preference for the use of English as a universalizing language. Because I did not have many resources and I could not afford to study computer science in depth within a single year, I developed a *rasquache* approach to new media arts production in which I could apply the theory and history I had learned.

In class, I remember one of our professors gave us an assignment to create 3D models at home using mathematical equations. I did not know how to use the 3D modeling software, so I went home and crocheted a few 3D objects using mathematical equations. I brought them to class in a plastic bag. He liked them and acknowledged that they fulfilled the assignment and that it was an artistic perspective to think outside the box and not allow limitations to stop us from producing art or artistic elements that challenge perceptions on what technology is and can be. I took this as an inspiring moment and continued my *rasquache* path.

On another occasion, I produced an experience using MaxMSP, a program to create interactive experiences. I quickly learned how to use it and produced a piece that was composed of 3 large image projections linked to words generated based on representations found in representations about the city of Tijuana. The first projection was composed of lines (each prompted by positive adjectives). The second projection was composed of bricks which slowly built a wall (each prompted by negative adjectives). The third projection was composed of both lines and bricks (prompted by adjectives with adverbs of degree). The binary positive vs. negative adjectives like *bella*, *horrible*, *extraordinaria*, *peligrosa* (beautiful, horrible, extraordinary, dangerous) were complexified with degree adverbs such as: *horriblemente bella*, *feamente extraordinaria* (horribly beautiful, hideously extraordinary), etc.

Visually, the third projection was a combination of bricks and lines that produced a wall with multiple superimposed lines that formed a vortex or hole through the wall. I was told that this piece could not possibly be art because I had to translate the words to English. To which I responded, “well, I did not make this piece for you,” meaning it was not centered on people who only speak English and not Spanish. These two were the greatest lessons I learned. Make new media art your way, in a way that questions Eurocentric perspectives that limit our approach to technology and second, make art centered around cultural dimensions of the epistemologies of the south, [11] centering audiences rarely centered and making others feel what it’s like to not be the center.

## ***Nepantlera:* toward healing**

Nepantla is a Nahuatl concept further theorized and studied by Gloria Anzaldúa. [12] Nepantla represents the liminal “in-between” that exists and does not exist, *el no lugar* the non-place. Nepantla or *nepantlerismo* is what is indefinable in the nucleus of the individual essence, a cross-roads, a sort of neutrality, [but not quite] an inconclusive metamorphosis [13] It is also an embodiment. To the people today known as the Aztecs and their descendants, “el tiempo y el espacio no [son] eran abstractos, sino que [confluyen] conflúan como sitios y acontecimientos.” [14] (time and space [are] were not abstract; instead they [participate] participated just like places and events do).

*Nepantlerismo* challenges the idea of belonging by questioning what elements define what is whole and apparently fixated. It is an embodiment of the liminal in-between spaces where painful negotiations take place, but where there are also diverse opportunities for healing through the exploration of what lies behind the inventions of nation state, identity, in the linguistic and cultural worlds that escape border thinking and exist regardless, because of, or even despite borders. Healing of the self and others comes from understanding that the relationships between coloniality-decoloniality, assimilation-resistance are fluid, ever-evolving, and context-specific.

According to Gloria Anzaldúa, among the many possible variations of the New Mestiza, *nepantleras* are unique as they are survivors who have been transformed by their encounters with and within Nepantla. [15] The experience of multiple realities turns her into a translator or guide of sorts by facilitating passages, a healer, and a shapeshifter. In my *transfronterismo nepantlero* I have embraced a deep consciousness in the decolonial stance of my Indigeneity and revolutionary ancestry and the deep intergenerational and recent wounds, as well as the collected knowledge that added dimensions of perception to my *transfronteriza* perspective.

My perception as a *rasquache transfronteriza nepantlera* observing and experiencing the diverse dimensions in which colonial violence persists—sadly, in what are still socially and politically acceptable ways—organically shifts me toward community-centered, problem-based approaches which intentionally pursue the goal that lies beyond any career or capitalist goal, as the EZLN Zapatista Army of National Liberation reminds us, *la verdadera lucha es por la vida* “y una vida que no sea solo nuestra, sino de todos” (the real struggle is for life itself “and not only a life that only belongs to us, but to all”) [16] and to me, academia and the arts are but tools to support and promulgate the decolonial option whose struggle is not for further privilege, but for life itself.

*Philosophical intelligence is never so truthful, clean, and precise as when it starts from oppression and does not have to defend any privileges, because it has none.* [17]

The imagined disciplinary borders and expectations found in institutions such as academia are but proxies of the ideological and physical ones as they limit our applications and understanding of what knowledge is and can look like. For example, formulas involving non-dominant languages or mixtures of languages like Spanglish, collective memory, orality, musicality, and other cultural practices of the south and east have a history of being marginalized or presented as niche topics.

The omission of diverse formats of knowledge forces into levels of internalization, but these fluctuate within what is a spectrum of possible relations to the coloniality/decoloniality struggle. While I particularly abhor the violence that brings forth this experience of having to choose and/or fight internalization and acknowledge that it has produced much unnecessary intergenerational pain and trauma, I fully acknowledge and celebrate the triumph of the ingenuity of humanity in the struggle for life that has resulted in significant contributions from within the multidimensional perpetual crossroads of Nèpantla.

With Anzaldúa we come to realize that being homogeneous to any specific identity is not a requirement, but an imposition of the concepts of purity further perpetuated by colonial thinking. Like many of us, I am multiplicities composed of a unique set of occurrences and specific contexts. There are many overlapping issues. I have personally encountered “decolonial” artists for example who want to reject all previous formulations, symbols, iconographies found in Chicana/o/x art and expression and that is their prerogative, but it's another form of internalization when they turn around and try to raise their own work as “truly” decolonial while invalidating or invisibilizing the work of Chicana/o/x artists who led us to this point in time with their work from the in-between or Nèpantla of this decolonial shift.

These impositions which pretend to be decolonial impose a newfound form of purism that is a distorted desperate imitation of supremacy, an oversimplified binary perspective that sees decoloniality as a hat and not a spectrum toward decoloniality. Much of our knowledge production and experiences are still a mystery to domineering and Eurocentric spaces. Thus, some people are against efforts toward decoloniality occurring in privileged places, but this is erred because the decolonial turn must be a simultaneous pluridimensional effort occurring in different political levels and spheres. [18]

The mirage of the Indigenous past and present as apparent innovation does not only appear to those who are foreign to Indigenous cultures and the spectrums of Indigeneity, it also appears to those who are forced to struggle in the recovery of their own Indigeneity. Thus, to inspire generations of *transfronterixs* around the world, I would like to share an overview of my own quest into establishing a *transfronteriza nepantlera* approach to *rasquache* anticolonial artisanal world-making in Virtual Reality and other Extended Realities.

The following was prepared with a consciousness of the little to no accessibility most people have to computer

science and other technical gadgets, and has an approach of make do with what may be available while also honoring the rich technological genius and perplexity found in artisanry which due to coloniality and the self-proclaimed supremacy of certain art forms and approaches to art making, has been deemed inferior or unrelated to technologically driven digital art praxis.

## Artisanal and Utilitarian New Media Art Production

The 2023 SIGGRAPH Autodesk Time Tunnel included my VR piece *The Coyolxauhqui Imperative 2020* and recognized it as the seminal piece of Xicanx *Indígena Transfronteriza* Immersive Muralism or what I also call *no-muralismo*. *No-muralismo*, is a response or expansion on Mexican nationalist muralism (beyond the male gaze, beyond the exotification, objectivization, and antiquifying of Indigenous cultures by elite, *mestizo*, and *whitexican* perspectives) and a move away from all walls (a form borders like to take) or the idea that we need walls (coloniality, eurocentrism, a capitalist worldview) to produce a point of reference for our perspective interventions or our *mundos*.

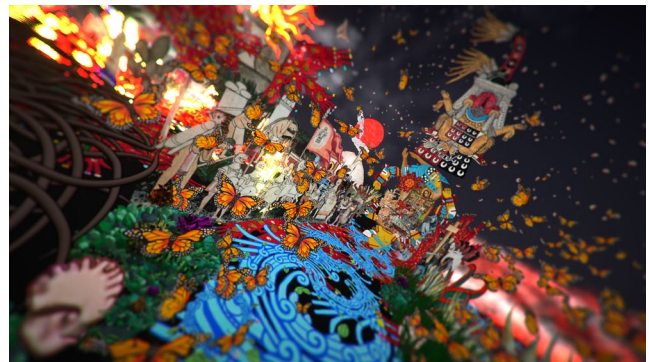


Figure 1. Still from *The Coyolxauhqui Imperative 2020*. ©Liliana Conlisk Gallegos

*Transfronteriza rasquache* immersive muralism or *no-muralismo* VR worlds have no walls and the virtual space is as infinite as the known and unknown legacies of resistance they stand on. They are a rejection to the requirement of centralizing Eurocentric approaches to technology driven art production. Content-wise, they represent issues and *conciencias* (consciousnesses) that are experienced by most of the world's population. Yet, these experiences are often ignored or rejected, either because they cause discomfort or negative political effects to the privileged, or simply because there is no perceived need to articulate such experiences in spaces of coloniality by those who experience them because they are not assimilated into such ideology. In these *no-murales*, the issues cannot be ignored as they are now engulfing, embracing, and surrounding the spectator who is in them (with the hyperconsciousness that they are obviously simulated) in a way they were never able to before.



Figure 2. Still from *The Coyolxauhqui Imperative 2020*. ©Liliana Conlisk Gallegos

*No-muralismo* is techno-artisanal in the sense that it includes a technique of fabrication or elaboration of objects by hand, with apparently simple non-automated objects and with the intentionality of expressing a specific cultural or identitary style and/or cultural tradition. *No-muralismo* is also a form of utilitarian new media, as it is more than a piece of art to look at and enjoy or feel. It is a piece of art to immerse in, a world to interact with, to critique, a world to learn from, a tool for representing and analyzing theoretical, scientific, spiritual findings, and other data in visual, oral, and musical ways.



Figure 3. Still from *Technocultura & Resistencia*. ©Liliana Conlisk Gallegos

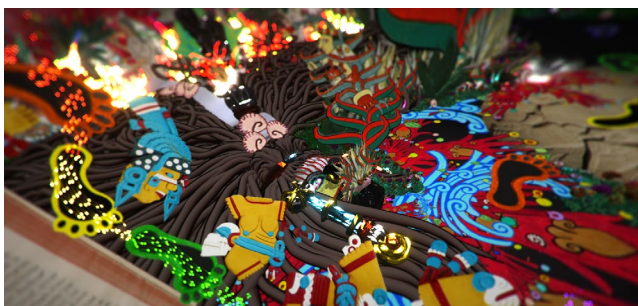


Figure 4. Still from *The Coyolxauhqui Imperative 2020*. ©Liliana Conlisk Gallegos

*No-muralismo* is an artistic formula for producing objects and experiences in extended realities (XR) with the

fundamental elements of composition and technique, while also being an object of practical use, functional at pragmatic, symbolic, emotional, carnal, and even spiritual levels. The spiritual aspect involves the possibility of visualizing multiple times, places, and perspectives simultaneously and have them interact with each other.

Finding oneself virtually surrounded by that which is usually locked inside feelings and thoughts, or which was either longed for or feared to be expressed, even taboo, and being able to navigate through it physically, creates a sense that there is something greater and further than the self. This can help the artist/artisan release from the absorption with internal processes that make it difficult to focus on events outside of them and which tend to lead to common reactions to trauma such as fear, anxiety, anger, depression, and guilt. I hope that the communal production of *no-muralismo* is useful to community efforts to bring awareness to where we are continuing to fail each other.

### *Monuments to the Pluriverse* The Pluriversal Future, Present, and Past,

This new media arts praxis autoethnography was prepared for the purpose of contextualizing, informing, and preparing my community to produce a series of at least 7 separate *no-murales* or immersive murals VR worlds to be part of the exhibition *Monuments to the Pluriverse* taking place at California State University, San Bernardino in 2024 and part of the programming for the UCR ARTS exhibition *Digital Capture: Southern California and the Origins of the Pixel-Based Image World* of the Getty's Pacific Standard Time (PST) *Art x Science x L.A.* initiative.

This community-based participatory action research exhibition to be organized between UC Riverside and CSUSB focuses on culturally relevant curriculum and mentorship. It aims to foster increased engagement and collaboration among diverse institutions, mostly Hispanic-Serving or those in development to become so, around the Inland Empire and the Bay Area. Partnerships include Berkeley City College, Crafton Hills College, Scripps College, and 2 local high schools from the Riverside and the San Bernardino Unified School Districts, involving university departments like Biology, Health Sciences, Sociology, English, Spanish, Chicana/o Studies, Gender and Queer Studies, and Disability Studies.

I am in the process of developing a universally accessible curriculum and a step-by-step instructional manual for creating *no-muralismo* in VR and assisting faculty and community advocates in designing course curriculum with activities, assignments, and visits to the CSUSB xREAL lab or bringing make-shift portable labs into community spaces. Each course, organization, or high school group involved will generate their own rasquache artisanal VR world, addressing themes such as navigating education while being undocumented, the significant and harmful impact of educators' reluctance to adhere to best practices for accommodating students with disabilities and neurodiverse needs on student well-being, the hardships endured due to a lack of

access to clean water sources at home, the impact of racism on probability of self-medicating through drug use and paths toward healing,<sup>6</sup> explorations of Queer identities in Mexican ranchos beyond Anglo-centric approaches, and the ways in which coloniality plays out in education and how this affects students self-perceptions and scholarly agency.

Immersive muralism worlds represent issues and *conciencias* (consciousnesses) shared by most of the world's population yet often overlooked or rejected due to discomfort or potential political ramifications for the privileged classes. In immersive muralism community issues cannot be ignored; they fully envelop the spectator in a manner previously unattainable, while involving them in a virtual world that heightens awareness of their simulated and artisanal nature. The involvement in Getty's programming will result in a virtual version of the exhibition hosted by UCR, and ACM SIGGRAPH in addition to this publication on community arts-praxis pedagogy rooted in *transfronteriza nepantlera rasquache* approaches to cultural knowledge production in new media art, as well as a universally accessible curriculum and step-by-step tutorial/manual that can be used as course material to produce *no-muralismo*.

Witnessing and being immersed in virtual worlds created by others and groups through a collective political imaginary that includes a diversity of symbols and cultural references through which they share relatable yet lesser-known aspects of local identity experiences in coloniality produces connections to that which lies beyond the sensory experience of the self in a profound empathetic understanding that we are all inter-connected in a human response to coloniality that is located beyond individual authorship or imaginary claims to possession. This leads to a final major goal which is the formulation of a community-based collective artistic movement, where an art-style is taught and shared to community members (not just imitated) and these are invited to develop their artistic approaches or become artists and proponents of this *rasquache* artisanal VR movement.

Extended Realities technology employed in this way makes it possible to engage in the production or the collective goal of producing a pluriverse or a world where all worlds fit. This idea of visualizing pluriversality through new media art is inspired by the words of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) 2005 Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona (2005),

*And, similarly, everywhere there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to relate to persons from other parts of Mexico and of the world. They are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone ... And we want to tell the world that we want to make you large, so large that all those worlds will fit, those worlds which are resisting because they want to destroy the*

*neoliberals and because they simply cannot stop fighting for humanity. [19]*

The name of the exhibition, *Monuments to the pluriverse* looks to turn ~~supremacist~~ monuments on their heads and replace them with community ones. Monuments are usually statues, buildings, or structures erected to celebrate, memorialize, commemorate individuals or events made famous and notable in this precise context of coloniality. Lately, monuments dedicated to colonial idols and violent moments of colonial history have been effaced, turned over, and/or destroyed as a form of demonstrating a rejection to the "myth of modernity" [20] upheld by the oppressive forms of rationalization that lead to the assumed sanctity of ~~supremacy~~ represented by those monuments.

A bitter irony lies in prioritizing inanimate objects symbolizing deceased heroes of ~~supremacy~~ over the urgent needs of our communities and the injustices they face. Meanwhile, the contributions of everyday heroes, who tirelessly combat violence and advocate for universal rights and justice, often go unnoticed. Mainstream discourse tends to sidestep or deliberately avoid these uncomfortable truths.

*Monuments to the pluriverse* asks how is the expression of a community coming together in solidarity to express their needs and be witness to each other in an artistic way not a heroic act that merits commemoration? To continue building on the work of destroying statues and monuments to the vanity of colonial oppression, can we decenter these and offer alternative counter-historical perspectives as a way of reclaiming our ongoing existence, participation, and contributions? Can we help support the ongoing shift toward the decolonial option and further foment intellectual discussion that builds consciousness through empathy? Beyond empathy, how can we foster profound respect, honor, and a celebration for each other's struggles and existence?

Based on my experiences and the wisdom passed on to me generationally and transgenerationally I observe, analyze, and respond as an activist anticolonial new media artist, curator, and scholar with a distinctive approach rooted in theoretical and socially conscious transborder cultural production. In the transdisciplinary realm this connects community-centered participatory action research, cultural spectrums of Indigeneity, decolonial consciousness, world-making, and new media art production with liberation pedagogy.

This article, blending theory, history, and autoethnography, traces the divergent paths of my decolonial/anticolonial transborder new media art production in relation to artisanal and utilitarian art forms. Providing a brief genealogy, it hopes to serve as a guide for the articulation and sharing of more methodologies of decolonial curatorial arts praxis that are culturally contextualized in new media arts and employing approaches and sensibilities akin to this *transfronteriza nepantlera rasquache* framework.

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<sup>6</sup> This project with promotor-led anti-discrimination substance use intervention is being conducted in collaboration

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In navigating the complex terrain of cultural production, I hope this work not only adds depth to the understanding of the diversity of anticolonial and decolonial transborder art but also inspires practitioners with practical insights to foster meaningful connections between new media art and their varying relationships to Indigenous cultural heritage. This is an invitation to join in the struggle toward rebellious decolonial approaches to new media art. Y seguimos en la lucha.

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humility, which was so refreshing for me as a transfronteriza at la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) I'm sure, he marked a shift in the experience of many more like me in academia. That always stayed with me, above all, the radical idea of moving towards liberation by knowing how to be a kind human, being inclusive, and accessible. In other words, more than anything, you exemplified to your students the true goal of the decolonial option, which is located beyond what can be thought, stated, or written... in living it, being it, doing it day by day.

Gracias y hasta siempre, Maestro Enrique Dussel.

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## Author Biography

Dr. Liliana Conlisk Gallegos (Dr. Machete or Mystic Machete) is a first-generation scholar from the Tijuana-San Diego border. She explores the decolonial option through live, interactive, immersive transborder *rasquache* new media art. These projects forge culturally specific collective spaces, presenting Chicana/o/x "Mestiza" Indigenous wisdom and artisanry as technological contributions. As a perpetual border-crosser, she metaphorically views prevailing notions of research, media, and technology as a *yonke* (junkyard), repurposing elements to amplify individual and collective expression, community healing, and social justice. She has organized/curated 14+ community-centered art interventions and her artwork is exhibited internationally. In 2022 she curated the first transborder decolonial international digital new media art exhibition, *The Future Past v. Coloniality: Decolonial Media Art Beyond 530 Years* which opened at the SIGGRAPH Asia conference in Daegu, South Korea. She is Associate Professor of Media at CSU San Bernardino and member of the ACM SIGGRAPH Digital Arts Committee.